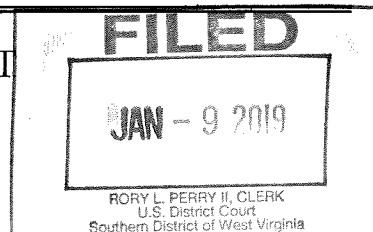


AO 106A (08/18) Application for a Warrant by Telephone or Other Reliable Electronic Means

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Southern District of West Virginia

In the Matter of the Search of

(Briefly describe the property to be searched
or identify the person by name and address)U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail Express Package
bearing tracking number "EG030401285US"

Case No. 2:18-mj-00117

APPLICATION FOR A WARRANT BY TELEPHONE OR OTHER RELIABLE ELECTRONIC MEANS

I, a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government, request a search warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that on the following person or property (identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location):

USPS Priority Mail Express Package bearing tracking number "EG030401285US" located in Charleston, WV.

located in the Southern District of West Virginia, there is now concealed (identify the person or describe the property to be seized):

controlled substances, the proceeds of drug trafficking, and other evidence of a violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 846.

The basis for the search under Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(c) is (check one or more):

- ☒ evidence of a crime;
☒ contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed;
☒ property designed for use, intended for use, or used in committing a crime;
☐ a person to be arrested or a person who is unlawfully restrained.

The search is related to a violation of:

Code Section	Offense Description
21 USC 841(a)(1) and 846	Distribution of a Controlled Substance and Conspiracy to Distribute a Controlled Substance

The application is based on these facts:
 See Attached Affidavit.

- ☒ Continued on the attached sheet.
☐ Delayed notice of _____ days (give exact ending date if more than 30 days: _____) is requested under 18 U.S.C. § 3103a, the basis of which is set forth on the attached sheet.

Joshua D. Mehall, United States Postal Inspector
 Printed name and title

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by
 _____ telephone _____ (specify reliable electronic means).

Date: October 23, 2018

Judge's signature

City and state: Beckley, WV

Omar J. Aboulhosen, United States Magistrate Judge
 Printed name and title

A F F I D A V I T

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

COUNTY OF KANAWHA, to-wit:

I, Joshua D. Mehall, being duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I am a United States Postal Inspector employed with the United States Postal Inspection Service since February 2007. My responsibilities include the investigation of crimes involving the U.S. Postal Service and crimes furthered through the use of the U.S. Mail. This includes the investigation of controlled substances sent through the U.S. Mail.

2. This affidavit is made in support of an application for a search warrant to search the contents of a U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail Express Package bearing tracking number "EG030401285US" with a return address of "Trudie Green, 615 Little Harts Creek, Harts, WV 25524" and a delivery address of "Jason Todd, 1593 Peninsala (sic) Drive, Arcata, CA 95521" (hereinafter referred to as the "SUBJECT PARCEL"). The SUBJECT PARCEL is a Priority Mail Express envelope with a handwritten Priority Mail Express Label. SUBJECT PARCEL was mailed on October 22, 2018 from Harts, West Virginia with \$24.90 postage affixed. The SUBJECT PARCEL is presently located at 1002 Lee St., Charleston, WV 25325.

3. The information contained in this affidavit is based on information I have gained from my investigation, my personal

observations, my training and experience, and information related to me by other law enforcement agents and witnesses.

4. Drug trafficking background gained over the years has shown that drug dealers and drug traffickers utilize the U.S. Postal Service for shipping controlled substances, including but not limited to cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, and pharmaceuticals. The use of Express Mail, Priority Mail and First Class Mail are favored because of the reliability, anonymity, speed (overnight service), minimal cost, and ability to track the mail piece.

5. Through experience gained in drug investigations by Postal Inspectors and other law enforcement agents, and through information provided by individuals who have been involved in buying, selling, and shipping drugs by Express Mail, Priority Mail and other types of shipments, the Postal Inspection Service has established a drug profile policy to screen mail packages for controlled substances. The profile characteristics include peculiarities in labeling and unusual packaging techniques as well as other considerations. The reason that handwritten labels are of interest is that the vast majority of premium mail services such as Express and Priority Mail involves business-to-business or business-to-person correspondence and features typewritten or computer-generated labels. Person-to-person correspondence (and

the handwritten labels attendant thereto) accounts for a very small minority of total Express and Priority Mail traffic.

6. Postal Inspectors, Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other intelligence sources have identified Arizona, Texas, California, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey and New York as major source states for illegal drugs flowing into areas within the Southern District of West Virginia.

7. From my experience, training, and knowledge of drug shipments through the U.S. Mail I am aware that drug traffickers frequently use fictitious names and addresses on the return address portion of the mailing label both to remain anonymous and avoid detection. Some return addresses have been found to be legitimate addresses, but the actual resident at those locations is either fictitious or non-existent. I am also aware that the address of the person that the mail piece is addressed to is generally not fictitious because a valid address is necessary for the package to be delivered. However, at times the true name of the addressee may be altered or ignored in favor of an alias or code name to better disguise their identity from law enforcement.

8. Based upon my knowledge, training, and experience I know that drug traffickers using the U.S. Postal Service often use unusual packaging techniques. These may include excessive taping or wrapping or by including within the package items having strong

odors in an effort to contain or mask the odor of controlled substances in order to avoid detection by trained narcotics dogs.

9. Your affiant knows based on training and experience as well as consultation with other agents, that U.S. Mail is often used by narcotic traffickers to transport controlled substances, as well as U.S. currency derived from the distribution of controlled substances, either as payment or proceeds. Your affiant knows based on training and experience that U.S. Postal Service Express Mail is commonly used to transport controlled substances because narcotic traffickers can track the parcels, and control dispatch times and locations.

BACKGROUND OF INVESTIGATION

10. On October 22, 2018, your affiant was notified by employees of the Harts, WV Post Office of a suspicious package. Employees stated they observed a white male come in to the post office and purchase a Priority Mail Express envelope. The male then returned to his vehicle, where he was observed placing large amounts of cash between the pages of a magazine, which he then placed inside the envelope he had purchased. Based on my training and experience, I am aware that those involved in the selling of illicit drugs often place drug proceeds between sheets of paper, either in books or magazines before shipping in order to avoid detection.

11. The employees also reported that they were aware that the name listed on the sender portion of the label was not consistent with the individuals who receive mail at that address.

12. On October 23, 2018, your affiant reviewed the SUBJECT PARCEL, and observed among other characteristics, that it bore a handwritten label and was to be delivered to California, a known source state for illegal drugs coming into the Southern District of West Virginia.

13. Your affiant made inquiries through CLEAR, an electronic database that has proven reliable in previous investigations in determining the legitimacy of name, address, and phone number information, regarding the return address, "Trudie Green, 615 Little Harts Creek, Harts, WV 25524". CLEAR showed no such name associated with that address.

14. Your affiant also made inquiries through CLEAR regarding the delivery address, "Jason Todd, 1593 Peninsala (sic) Drive, Arcata, CA 95521". CLEAR showed no such name associated with that address. Due to the unusual street name on the delivery address, your affiant also made inquiries through CLEAR using the original spelling "Peninsala", and also "Peninsula"

15. TFC Kevin Williams, West Virginia State Police, provided a trained narcotic detection dog named "FEERA". FEERA has

experience with narcotics investigations including drug parcels and was last certified in February 2018.¹

15. On October 23, 2018, the SUBJECT PARCEL was placed in a line-up with three additional boxes of various shapes and sizes. FEERA conducted an exterior examination of all the parcels. TFC Williams informed me that FEERA positively alerted on the SUBJECT PARCEL indicating the presence of the odor of a controlled substance.


16. Based on the information contained herein, your affiant maintains there is probable cause to believe that the SUBJECT PARCEL - U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail Express Package "EG030401285US" - contains controlled substances, and/or proceeds which are evidence thereof, and/or contraband, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), 843(b) and 846.

¹Narcotics dogs trained using heroin are also able to detect the odor of other opiate based substances such as oxycodone, oxymorphone, hydrocodone, morphine, and the like. Because these substances are all derived from the poppy plant, they share a molecular foundation recognizable to the dog. Many trainers and certifying entities such as the West Virginia Police Canine Association believe that training and certifying a dog on pure heroin results in a more reliable dog. This is because it makes certain that the dog is trained to locate the odor of the foundational molecule and not some other non-controlled substance such as an agent used to "cut" heroin or bonding agents such as gluten used in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals.

Further your affiant sayeth naught.


JOSHUA D. MEHALL
POSTAL INSPECTOR

Sworn to before me, and subscribed in my presence, this 23rd
Day of October, 2018.


OMAR J. ABOULHOSN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE